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A

# Funeral Sermon

Preach'd on the

D E A T H

OF

Mrs. *SARAH WRIGHT*,

Of DEVIZES, Widow:

Who Deceas'd, June the 8th, 1714.

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By JOHN FILKES.

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(3)

TO

My Honour'd Kinswoman,

**Mrs. MEREWETHER,**

Neece to the Deceas'd

**Mrs. WRIGHT.**

**MADAM,**

**A**S the Death of your dear Aunt has occasion'd a very melancholy Scene, so it affords no small Comfort to consider, that the Director of it is infinitely wise and good, and can cause it to contri-

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

bute to your eternal Benefit: Yea, such is the Perfection of his Nature, that 'tis impossible for him ever to err in the ordering and disposal of Events, or to fall into undue Measures in any one Branch of his Providence. And even while Clouds and Darkness are round about him, Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne. Instead therefore of repining at any of his Appointments, it concerns us to be silent before him, and at all times to rejoice and put our Trust in him.

And with regard to the Deceas'd, since you have so much reason to believe that her Change is infinitely for her Advantage, you have the less Reason to lament the Loss of her Company and agreeable Society, and none at all to mourn as those who have no Hope.

You have long since been convinc'd, I am well satisfy'd, that All is Vanity; and the more you think of this, the less you will grieve at the Loss of any Friend. For if all here be Vanity, 'tis no more strange that our Friends should die, than that any other

natural

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natural Event should happen. Which when we consider, we must needs believe, that our real Happiness lies in something higher, tho we are both allow'd and oblig'd to love our Friends and Relations: And therefore when Death deprives us of them, our main Interest may yet be safe; which is a Mercy too great to be express'd, and too plain to be deny'd.

That the chief Good, and nothing else, can make us truly happy, is very evident, in that the Soul can never rest satisfy'd in the Enjoyment of any other. For tho from a wrong Judgment, and a Misapprehension of things view'd in a false Light, she may for a time adhere to this or that particular Good; yet sooner or later she takes her Leave of it, and pursues a fresh Object, which, when acquir'd, proves as unsatisfying as the former. And thus she will continue always in motion, restless and uneasy, till she comes to fix on the supreme and only satisfying Good. For as a subordinate End leads to that which is ultimate, so a created and inferior Good to the increased and supreme; which till we are possess'd of, and do enjoy,

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we shall never truly know what perfect Happiness is: For which reason we should not make our selves miserable for the Loss of that, which never had it in its power to make us compleatly happy.

And did we but attend to it, daily Experience would teach us the same Doctrine, which the wise Author of my Text hath done; and we could not but see that the World, as well as Man, goes on in a vain Shew, appearing to be something, and boasting of its Worth, when 'tis but a Trifle, or (if I may be allow'd the Expression) a gilded Nothing. Wilt thou, says Solomon, set thine Eyes upon that which is not? As if he esteem'd the World, and every thing belonging to it, a Non-entity, or mere Figment of the Brain: Or, as if it were an Idol, as sure enough 'tis, which, in the words of the Apostle, is nothing but the Fiction of vain and deluded Men.

However, 'tis not my Design, in any thing I have said of the Vanity of the World in the following Discourse, more than it was Solomon's in the words of my Text, to vilify any part of the Creation: For as

vain

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vain as the World is, 'tis so noble a Structure, as in no respect to be unworthy of its Author. And in it the great Architect hath clearly shewn the Immensity of his Wisdom and Goodness, as well as his eternal Power and Godhead. When therefore any thing is there spoken diminutively of the World, 'tis to be understood not in an absolute but comparative sense. Nor is the World to be then consider'd under any such View, as it refers and leads to God; but as it usurps his Place, and sets it self in it. And by the World nothing else is intended, many times, but the Lusts and Vanities of it; which the Tempter makes use of to betray us into Sin, and thereby into Ruin. And this I mention for the sake of those, who, perhaps, will think I have been too long, both in detecting the Vanity, and dissuading from the Love of the World.

But was this, M A D A M, the greatest Fault of the Discourse now laid before you, I should not much be concern'd at it: For 'tis what, I would not doubt, you'll easily pardon, as I have reason to hope you will any other Exceptions it may be liable to;

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especially

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especially since 'tis owing to your self and your honour'd Father, who both heard it, that 'tis now made publick.

That by all which is said in it, and by what else you have seen, or may yet see, of the Vanity of the Creature, you may be the more devoted to God, and united to him, is the sincere Prayer of,

M A D A M,

Your very Respectful Humble Servant,

JOHN FILKES.

# A FUNERAL SERMON ON THE DEATH OF Mrs. SARAH WRIGHT.

**H**O W much soever Men may differ from one another, either in their Sentiments, or worldly Circumstances; yet they all agree in the Desire of Happiness, and will shortly be on a Level in the Grave, *the House appointed Job 30.23. for all Living.*

That

That all must die, save those whom the Apostle excepts, *viz.* such as shall be found alive at the Coming of Christ, is so very plain, that we may well say with the Psalmist, Ps. 89. 48. *What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death?* And in this sense, as the same inspired Author speaks, *Men of low Degree are Vanity, and Men of high Degree a Lye:* yea, 39. 5. *every Man at his best State, is altogether Vanity.*

But as vain as we all are, we have none of us the Vanity not to desire to be happy. This Desire is so natural to us, that it enters into our Beings, and can't be separated from them. And yet, alas! so great is the Depravity of human Nature, that we are ready to place our Happiness in any thing, rather than that wherein it really consists. Nor is it more natural to us to say, *Who will shew us any good?* than 'tis to seek it in present and perishing things.

But as apt as we are to admire these, and build our Hopes upon them, Solomon, who apply'd himself to this Search, to find out the desir'd Felicity, met with nothing but Disappointment in it: For tho by his great Wisdom and long Study he had made a large Progress, and try'd many Experiments this way; yet at last finding all his Essays and Attempts fruitless, and the Hopes he had rais'd upon them sapt and baffled, he sits down and tells us, *All is Vanity.*

In which words this celebrated Preacher gives us the Sum of what he design'd to discourse of in this Book, which is to shew the Vanity of all things in this World. And he brings them in with the preceding part of the Verse, without any Preface, or artful Transition ; even in as surprizing a manner, as the melancholy News was brought to most of our Ears, of the Death of our beloved and Christian Friend, whose Funeral Sermon we are now to attend unto. And 'twere well, if, by all, we were so surpriz'd into the Consideration of our latter End, as never to forget it, or our Duty to him, who is the only Source of our Being and Blessedness : And who but would wish for this, that considers all besides is Vanity?

Under this Limitation then we are to take the word *All* in the Text, as only respecting this World. For what can be more absurd, than to imagine it should extend to the glorious Objects and Felicities of the other World ; or to what is necessary for obtaining a share therein, Religion and Godliness ? This is the Wisdom he recommends in his *Proverbs*, and what he had in view in this Book of *Ecclesiastes*, as is very plain from the Conclusion of it, where he enjoins us to *fear God, and keep his Commandments*. So that by *All* here, he means the Flatteries, vain Appearances, and deluding

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luding Objects of this World ; the Wisdom, Riches, Honours and Pleasures of it. And this seems farther evident, from the Enumeration he makes of all those Things which Men are apt extravagantly to esteem, and set their Hearts upon.

Now that which he affirms of all these, is, not only that they are *vain*, but *Vanity* : Nay, as in the former part of the Verse, *Vanity of Vanities* ; that is to say, they are most vain, even beyond what Words can express, or to the last degree of Vanity. And if it be ask'd, On what account is the World thus vain ? The Answer is, 'Tis vain for those Purposes, to which the generality of Men are wont to apply it ; that is, 'tis unable to make them truly and compleatly happy.

I deny not but the things of this Life are of great use in their place, and serve divers good Purposes ; but whenever we think to extract a real Happiness from them, and torture Nature never so much for that purpose, they will surely disappoint us, and prove but Vanity to us ; they will in no wise satisfy the Craving of our Minds, nor answer the Expectations we have from them. And it must likewise be own'd that *Vanity*, when apply'd to sublunary Things, often signifies the Inconstancy, Emptiness, and comparative Worthlessness of them ; but even from thence, as also from our own Frailty, we may

may justly infer that nothing here below can be the chief Good or Happiness of Man. 'Tis also true, that this World, and all the Creatures in it, are, as God hath said, *very good*, in respect of their Kind and design'd Ends; but if we speak of Good universally, and in the highest Sense, so they are not good, except in our wild Conceits. Nay, tho the Blessings of this Life come under the denomination of Good, as they are the Effects of God's Goodness, and contain'd in his Promises, yet are they not good without limitation, but only in a certain respect: For as these are frequently dispens'd <sup>Mat. 5.45</sup> in a promiscuous manner to the Evil and to the Good, so a prosperous State in this World is so far from securing us against the Miseries of another, that it often betrays into Sin, the Cause of Perdition, or some way <sup>Ecc. 5.13.</sup> or other proves hurtful to us.

In a word therefore, such and so great is the Vanity of this World, that it can never give us that Satisfaction and Rest of Mind, which is necessary to make us compleatly happy.

And in speaking to this Subject,

I. I shall endeavour the Proof of it.

II. I shall make some Reflections upon it.

I. Among the many Arguments which might be brought to shew the Insufficiency

of

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of this World to render us truly and completely happy, I shall chiefly insist on these three :

1. The Enjoyments of the World.
2. The Nature and Capacity of the Soul of Man.
3. The Disproportion and Difference between the Soul and the World.

1. As to this World, *Solomon*, upon mature Thoughts, as you have heard, declares *all to be Vanity*; from whom if we dissent, as by our Actions, for the most part, we seem to do, 'tis not because we have more, but less Wisdom than he had. And in like manner the inspir'd Psalmist tells us, that he had *seen an End*, not only of this and t'other, but of *all Perfection*. And not only our Saviour's Doctrine, which requires us *first to seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, but his Example also speaks plainly and full to this purpose: For would he have neglected the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World, as he did, if the Happiness we are speaking of could have been found in them? Or would he then have enjoin'd his Disciples to renounce and forsake the World? We may well suppose, he would rather have encourag'd them to have try'd to get it, by bending their Studies and Labours that way. But instead of this, as the Evangelists fully shew, he strenuously pres'd the quite contrary. And so

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so far was he from flattering Men in their worldly Hopes, that he expressly told them, *A Man's Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* And by that wretched Fool, mention'd in the same Chapter, he represents to us the miserable State of him that *layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.* Wherefore we may justly say of every carnal Person, who is in quest after an earthly Good, and Satisfaction in it, as our Lord did of the unclean Spirit going out of a Man, *He walketh thro dry Places, seeking Rest, and findeth none.* And in such a Pursuit as this we only vex and tantalize, yea cheat and deceive our selves; for we reach after that we can never obtain, and embrace a Shadow, instead of the suppos'd and intended Object. And since the World thus deceives us, 'tis easy to observe, that, like the Religion of too many, 'tis only an empty Show; or, as some have said of human Life, *the Dream of a Shadow.* And did we but divest the World of its false Appearances, and pluck off its Mask, we could not but easily discover its Vanity. We should then feel the Vanity of human Knowledge, Learning and Wisdom; and of the Beauty, Health and Strength of the Body. But on these I design not at present to insist, but only to speak something, First, Of the Vanity of Pleasures and the Delights of Sense: And, Secondly,

Secondly, Of the Vanity of Riches and Honours; which tho they are at the disposal of a Divine Providence, are often call'd *the Goods of Fortune*.

Heb. 11.  
25.

Prov. 14.  
13.

(1.) I will begin with carnal Mirth and sensual Delights; or, what the Author to the *Hebrews* calls, *The Pleasures of Sin*. The Vanity of which betrays it self, in that they are inferior to the Pleasures and Enjoyments even of the Brutes, as being in the Opinion of many less exquisite and intense, and attended however with great Fear, Remorse, Shame, and Guilt, from the Reflections of which the Enjoyments of Brutes receive no allay. Impure Pleasures, instead of Profit and Contentment, requite the Admirers of them with Anguish and Shame; and *even in Laughter the Heart is oftentimes sorrowful*. The Gratifications of inordinate Lust are often follow'd with great Horrors, and very cutting Reflections, and don't give near so much Pleasure to the Body, as Torment to the Mind; and the Relish which some seem to have of them is as soon lost, as the Image of a Seal on the fluid Waters. And he who hath spent the Day in Revelling and Excess, differs nothing at Night from him who hath liv'd all the while in Sobriety and Temperance; save that the one hath those inward Regrets, and is haunted with those Furies, which the other knows nothing of. But as short-liv'd and vanishing as such Pleasure is, the

the Sorrow succeeding it will prove very tedious. The Pain will settle and fix in the most sensible Part, and the Hook continue to stick, when the Pleasure of the Bait is over and past. And what a poor Enjoyment is that, which can't endure the Reflections of our Minds, without filling them with Shame and Guilt, Bitterness and Remorse?

And when we have made the most we can of our Pleasures, we can enjoy them but a very short Season. For as our *Life*, when extended to its ordinary, or even longest measure, *is but an Hand's Breadth*, and *an Vapour that appeareth for a little time; and then vanisheth away*; so “Pleasure, that great Practical Witch, says Dr. Barrow, which so in-  
chants the World, and allures Mankind into Sin and Misery, is more transitory <sup>pag. 30.</sup> than the shortest Life, and dies in the very Enjoyment.” And what a greater Author suggests to us of the Fool’s Laughter, when he compares it to the crackling <sup>Eccl. 7. 6.</sup> or noise of Thorns under a Pot, holds true of all carnal Delights; which, to pursue the Metaphor, are but, as Dr. Lucas expresses it, “a sudden Blaze, that flashes, and then dies.” While therefore we seek to retain our Pleasures, and delight our-selves in them, we thereby extinguish, and instantly lose them. And many of them, which come recommended to us under the specious

cious Names of Recreation and Diversion, are rather conceited than real, having their Foundation not so much in Nature, as in Fancy and Humour ; so that we often see, what is entertaining to one, is to another a Burden and Toil. And even those we most relish, we often outlive, and oftner shift and grow weary of them. And indeed there is none of them but we shall survive

*Ecc. 12. 1. and take our farewell of, when Solomon's evil Day shall overtake us, tho Death should spare us longer.*

(2.) As for Wealth, Honours and Preferment, they have no less a Degree of Vanity : For upon Inquiry we shall find, that none of them are necessary, but rather superfluous, to the great Ends of Life. And therefore if, as luxuriant Branches, they are lopt off from us, we may enjoy Life well enough without them, and better in all probability than many who abound with them. And as earnestly as they are contended for, 'tis but a little while, and they will all disappear and dwindle into nothing. Where are the proud *Pharaohs*, and renown'd *Cesars*, who once made so great a Figure in the World ? Nay, what Remains are there of some of these, save only their Names, which signify very little to us, and just nothing to them ? Nor need we confine our Reflections to any of these, or bring them down to those of later times nearer home,

home, or among our selves ; for we have many Instances of those who have liv'd to see the Ruins of their own Greatness. So stupendous are the Turns of Providence, and Vicissitudes of earthly things ! Many Examples of this kind might be given, as of *Haman*, *Adonibezek*, the Prince of *Tyrus*, Esth. 6. 7. *Judg. 1.* and several of the Kings of *Judah*, as *Je-hoahaz*, *Jeboiachim*, *Zedekiah*, &c. \* *Ezek. 28. 6, 7.*

Having taken this short View of the Variety of Riches and Honours in the general, I'll now proceed to consider them apart, and somewhat more distinctly. And,

As to Riches, how tempting soever they may seem to be, and as prone as we are to place our Confidence in them, they are very uncertain in the possession : For, as the Wiseman says, *they make themselves Wings, and fly away*, notwithstanding all our Care to preserve them. And elsewhere, to shew us of what little account they are, he assures us, that *Riches profit not in the Day of Wrath* ; and therefore can't, like Righteousness,

<sup>1</sup> Tim. 6.

<sup>17.</sup>

Prov. 23. 5.

Prov. 11. 4.

\* To these might be added, with many others, *Tarquinus Superbus*, *Hannibal*, *Valerius*, *Romanus III.* (an Eastern Emperor) *Charles King of Castile, Aragon, &c.* *Demetrius King of Macedon*, *Dionysius II. King of Syracuse*, and *Sardanapalus the last of the old Assyrian Monarchs* ; whose Treasure at *Niniveh* is said to have been to the Value of an Hundred Millions of Talents of Gold, and a Thousand Millions of Talents of Silver ; but having lost his Power, and being distress'd, he destroy'd it all, with himself, his Wives and Eunuchs, in one Funeral Pile.

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*ness, deliver from Death.* And as he tells us  
 Ch. 27. 24. in another place, that *Riches are not for ever*; so neither is the rich Man himself, as St. Jam. 1. 11. *James* says, but like the Flower of the Grafs, that soon fades and passeth away, leaving all behind him. And could we secure our Mat. 6. 19. *Treasure against Moth and Rust*, yet *Thieves may break thro and steal it*, as safe as we may think our Houses to be; and even those Parts of it, which seem to be most solid, as Silver and Gold, are nevertheless, as the 1 Pet. 1. 18. *Apostle Peter* tells us, *corruptible things*.

Let us next take a View of the Honours and Grandeur of the World, which may, I confess, make one Person a fair Mark of another's Envy, but add nothing to his real Value and intrinsick Goodness: and when we go off the Stage of this World, as we shortly must, it will signify little to us, whether we have acted a noble or despicable part in it. For the greatest Character and most honourable Title, how much soever it may swell us with vain Pride and imaginary Felicity, will remain with us no longer than the Scene shall last. And, Oh! how often, and suddenly too, do we see the Scene shifted? So true is it, that *Man, being in Honour, abideth not*; neither doth the Crown endure to every Generation. What can be more uncertain and precarious than the Honour and Applause of Men? If we examine into its Tenure, we shall find 'tis held

Psal. 49.

12.

Prov. 27.

24.

held and enjoy'd at the Courtesy of another, and depends upon the fickle Humours of Men, whose Behaviour many times is not unlike that of the *Jews* to *Christ*, who one day cry'd *Hosannah*, and another day, *Crucify him*. Nor is it in it self but a thin and airy Bubble, driven and broken by the Blast almost of every Breath. And indeed those temporal things, which may seem most substantial and solid, will, if we go about to grasp them, slip from us as soon as any of the rest, and prove themselves but mere Shadows. Nor can any of them give that Satisfaction and Peace to our Minds, as will equal the Vexation and Trouble which attends them. Worldly Grandeur, that Idol of ambitious Minds, what is it but a stupendous and dreadful Precipice, from whence many have fallen and been dash'd to pieces? And therefore well may the Psalmist call such Advancements *slippery Places*. We <sup>Psal. 73.</sup> little think what Care some have to maintain their Port and Character, lest otherwise they sink into Contempt and Disgrace; or how much they are troubled and disorder'd, when they miss of the Honour they have been in pursuit of. A small Affront or Slight, be it never so trivial, is sufficient, in proud Spirits, to imbitter much Honour, as we see in the Instance of *Haman*. Nor are Diadems and Crowns, as glittering as they appear, without their Troubles and Dis-

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Christian  
Warfare,  
Part 2.  
ch.13. §3.

Disquietude. Constantine the Great, as *Eusebius* relates, thought his Office to be more troublous and laborious, than that of a Shepherd. And even an Heathen Monarch, who was under no Temptation to decry, as many do, what he could not reach, told his Friend, who admir'd his Happiness, and (as Bishop *Downham* says) "measur'd his inward Comfort and Content-

"ment by his outward Rule," that if he knew with how many Evils that Diadem of his was replenish'd, he would not take it up, tho he found it on a Dunghill. And the Emperor *Vespasian*, amidst the Glory of his Triumph, is said to have reflected on the Folly of so tedious a Vanity. And indeed both the Cares and Perils of crown'd Heads are generally more and greater than we can easily think, or, if we knew them, would wish to feel. And would time allow us to run thro the several States and Conditions of human Life, we should find them all not only to be Vanity, but Vexation of Spirit. But I must now proceed to the Consideration of the second thing propos'd.

2. The next thing to be consider'd, is the Nature and Capacity of the Soul of Man; which being of a Divine Nature and Original, can take up its Rest in none but Him from whom it deriv'd its Being. For as the Rivers return into the Sea, from whence they came; so our Souls, which in

a peculiar Sense are call'd God's Offspring, can never be happy, or reach their End, till they so return as to unite themselves to him. And tho their Desires are, and should be, under the Limits of the Divine Will, yet they are boundless as to the Good to which they aspire, and the Happiness they pursue. Not finding it therefore in one thing, they make tryal of another, and so go on with fresh Experiments, or still repeat the same, always restless and uneasy, till they light upon the only satisfying Object. While Man sought his Happiness at first in God his Maker, 'twas not possible that he should miss of it; but seeking it, as now, in the Creature, his Attempts are only like filling a Sieve with Water, all vain and fruitless. And on this account we may all say with the Church in the *Lamentations*, *We labour, and have no Rest.* Nor is it Lam. 5.5. strange that it should be so, since those very things which are entertaining in the Pursuit, give nothing but Trouble and Disappointment in the Enjoyment; of which we can't want Evidence, whenever we do but reflect on our selves. If nothing short of God can fill the Capacity of our Souls, and compleat our Happiness in the next World, much less in this. 'Tis not, we all know, the Light of the Stars, but of the Sun that makes Day; and 'tis only the Presence of God that makes Heaven to be really so to

his People. Not the Magnificence and Splendour of the Place, nor the Glory of its Inhabitants, nor the Melody of their Songs, nor the Agreeableness of their Conversation, separate from God, would make us truly happy. What solid Happiness then can the best Enjoyments of this World afford?

Psal. 73. When therefore the Psalmist had  
25. said, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* he might very well add, *And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides,* or in comparison of Thee.

3. Let us now proceed to the last thing to be consider'd, which is, the Disproportion between the things of this World, and the Soul of Man. And here the Difference will be found so great, that we may as well think to satisfy our Hunger with a Shadow, or fill our Hand with Knowledge and Learning, as the Soul with the World; every thing of the one being, in a manner, as little suited to the Faculties of the other, as Sounds to the Organ of Sight, or Colours to that of Hearing. That the Difference is thus great between the World and the Soul, will be very evident to all, who consider not only the Disagreement in their Nature, but also their Inequality in Duration. As to both of

Isa. 28. 20. which, who is there but must say of the World, in the words of the Prophet, *The Bed is shorter than that a Man can stretch himself on it, and the Covering narrower than that he*

he can wrap himself in it? And that this disproportion must breed uneasiness and disquiet, sure, all will readily grant.

Tho we may therefore, with Brutes, find something here to gratify and please our animal and sensitive Part; yet that which is rational and more noble, will at the same time languish and pine away, for want of suitable Food to refresh and nourish it. Which, till Grapes are gather'd of Thorns, this World can't afford.

For, as to Honours, they are so much like *Ephraim's Food, the Wind*, that our Souls can never be satisfied with them. The whole World, as we are told, could not answer the Ambition of one Monarch.

And as to the Pleasures of the World, they are as little suited to give us Contentment; since common Experience shews us, that the more we seek to gratify our selves with them, the more our Passions heighten and grow upon us, and *inflame* us to them.

In the same manner also do Riches affect us, whenever they are made the Object of our inordinate Pursuits. For, while we raise our Fortunes, we but increase our Desires, and put them into a stronger Motion, instead of giving them Rest and Satisfaction. And so infatiate are our Appetites, when the Reins are given 'em, and they are let loose on the World, that whatever be our Ac-  
quests,

quests, they'll grow in Proportion with, nay, in greater Degrees than our Estates. For these Desires flowing from Nature, as diseased, the Case is not unlike that of a Man in a Fever, when what he greedily drinks to satisfy and quench his Thirst, doth but the more provoke and inflame it. And to shew us the Nature of *Riches* by their Name, they are call'd by him, who best knew 'em, *The Mammon of Unrighteousness*. The Reason of which probably is, not simply as they are many times unjustly got, and converted to wrong Purposes; but because they are lying and deceitful; not just and true to what they seem to promise, nor to the Confidence, or Hope reposed in them by their Admirers. And in this sense, as they prove false to us, who but sees how aptly they are opposed by our Saviour, in the Application of his Parable, unto the *true Riches*, which alone can content us? And to put this matter out of all Dispute, we

*See Synop. Critic. in loc.*

Eccles. 5. 10. are expressly told, that *he that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver; nor he that loveth Abundance, with Increase.* The rich Man therefore, spoken of in the Parable, did shamefully mistake, and abundantly merit the disgraceful Name God gave him of *a Fool*, in promising Rest to his Soul, upon the account of his full Granaries and Barns: As if a Plenty of that kind, so disproportionate to the Nature and Affections of an immortal

tal Spirit, could satisfy and content it: to imagine which, is doubtless to contradict the Experience of all Mankind. For who is there, whatever others think of him, but must be conscious to himself, of an inward Want, amidst his outward Plenty; and that his Soul will be still empty, if not otherwise supply'd?

Nor should it be wondred at, if the Soul can derive no solid Happiness from the things of this World, which is unable to satisfy even our bodily Senses. For, as the Wise Man tells us, *The Eye is not satisfied* Eccles. 1.8. *with seeing, nor the Ear fill'd with hearing.*

The same Lesson we may learn from the Voice of the Creatures themselves, who, if not at present, yet however at last do all confess Happiness is not to be found in them. *The Depth saith it is not in me: and the Sea saith it is not with me.* And the same Language speak all the rest. I don't deny but the World bids high for our Hearts, as knowing it can never hurt us, unless it gain them. And therefore it promises not only to fill our Houses, but likewise our Desires; and to stand by us in the time of our greatest Extremity, as well as give a Supply to our present Wants. But what of all this doth it perform? For tho to entice the ignorant and unwary Traveller, it strews his way with Flowers, and adorns it with all the Delights of Sense; yet at the same time,

to

to intrap him, 'tis full of Gins and deadly  
Pits. And when it makes the greatest Pre-

2 Sam. 20. 9. tences of Friendship to us, it either, as *Joab*,  
falls treacherously upon us; or, like *Dalilah*,  
calls in our greatest Enemies, to insult and  
ruin us. But it treats ~~all~~ its Admirers in  
the manner which *Solomon* says of the strange

Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5. Woman, *Her Lips drop as an Honey-Comb,*  
*and her Mouth is smoother than Oil: But her*  
*End is bitter as Wormwood, sharp as a two-edged*  
*Sword. Her Feet go down to Death; her Steps*

*take hold on Hell.* Thus while the World,  
with fair Words and Flatteries, gains on  
our Credulity, and raiseth our Hopes, it  
only deceives us; as the Serpent, through  
the like Methods, beguiled *Eve*. Nor is it  
to be wonder'd at, if it proves such a Lyar to  
us; since he, who is call'd *the God of this*

*World*, whom it obeys and serves, was no-  
toriously so to our first Parents. But tho;  
in imitation of him, it tells us, that if we'll  
but hearken to it, we shall be as happy as  
Gods; yet if we address and apply our  
selves to it for what it promiseth, but can't  
give, folliciting it to fill our Hearts as well  
as our Houses, 'twill at last be provok'd to  
speak the Truth, and will answser us, like

Gen. 30. 2. the Patriarch to his Confort, *Am I in God's*  
*stead?*

And could we but prevail upon our selves  
to speak the Sentiments of our Minds, we  
must necessarily agree with the Creatures  
in

in this their Suffrage: For upon due Reflection, we must easily perceive, that when we enjoy, what before we desired, we, in many Instances, grow weary of it; and quickly confess our uneasiness, by pursuing something else. And as natural as 'tis for us to inquire after a Good, in which we may acquiesce, rest satisfy'd, and have our Wants supply'd; yet that our Happiness is not here, is to be seen and read, in what we are made to feel, and often complain of, tho against our wills. Nay, 'tis writ, as it were, with capital Letters in our deluded Hopes, and baffled Expectations, vainly formed on the Impostures, false Appearances, and empty Injoyments of the World. For tho our Expectations from it have been big, yet what but Disappointment have we found in it? And notwithstanding *we sow much, we Hag. 1. 6. bring in little.* Men, 'tis true, of small Experience and Observation, may have other Thoughts of the World, but a little time and trial more will certainly convince them of this Truth: For, who that is about to leave this World, and sees himself on the Borders of another, but will own the Vanity and Emptiness of all things here? Yea if now we know any thing, as we ought to know, of these matters, we must needs confess, that there is no Proportion here betwixt our Expectations and Injoyments; what we propose to our selves, and do find in

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in the Creatures. For, contrary to the Heavenly Bodies, the more distant earthly Enjoyments are from us, the greater they are in our eye; but when we come at them, they appear very little and inconsiderable; nor can we touch them, but, like the Apples of *Sodom*, they presently fall into Ashes, notwithstanding their beautiful Form. Children are vainly wont to conceit how high they could reach, were they on such an Eminence. And with a Vanity equal to theirs, we are ready to think, could we but get this State, or that Post, what great things we would do, and how happy we should be; whereas, having obtain'd it, we neither appear nor act according to our Pre-posseßions, and vain Conceits, but are as far as before from what we had in view. In a word, 'tis often with us as 'twas with the *Israelites*, who when they were fed according to their lusting, with Manna and Quails, grew weary of both; and quickly did loath, what they had so impatiently desired.

II. I come now to make some Reflections on what hath been said. And here I might offer several things,

1. To humble our Pride and vain Confidence.
2. To moderate our Grief and Care about earthly Things. And,

3. To

3. To dissuade us from an immoderate Love of the World.

But 'tis the last of these I design to insist on at this time.

Give me leave therefore to propose St. John's Advice to you, *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World*, viz. <sup>1 John 2. 15.</sup> *The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*; for, *All is Vanity*. And let me add, in the words of the kingly Prophet, *How long, ye Sons of Men, will ye love Vanity, and seek after Leasing?* <sup>Psal. 4. 2.</sup> That this may have its due weight, please to consider, that the Love of this World is the <sup>1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.</sup> Root of all Evil; and they drown themselves in Destruction and Perdition, who are resolved to get it. And while we are *Friends of the World*, we shall be the *Enemies of God*; <sup>James 4.4.</sup> since when we give it our Heart, we make a God of it, as much as in us lies, and are guilty of *Idolatry*.

There have, indeed, been many Opinions in the World, concerning the chief Good of Man; but whatever it is, it must be every way suited to our real Wants and just Desires, and be in it self an universal, perfect, and permanent Good, to be loved purely for it self, and not to a higher End. In this sense, not to trouble you with the Notion of *Malebrach* and his Followers, or the various Opinions of other Philosophers; it holds true, without exception, *There is none* <sup>Math. 19.</sup> *Good* <sup>17.</sup>

*Good but God.* Consequently there is none beside him, who should be our chief and last End, who is to be esteem'd most amiable, and is most to be desired of us. And since we may say of our final Happiness, as Job did of *Wisdom* and *Understanding*,

*Job 28.13. Man knoweth not the Price of it, neither is it found in the Land of the Living:* it follows, that in hunting after it here below, we seek the *Living among the Dead*; disquiet

*Isa. 55.2. our selves in vain; spend our Money for that which is not Bread, and our Labour for that which satisfieth not.* Yea, while we thus think of finding that in a limited, which can only be had in an infinite Good, we expose our selves to the Mockery and Delusion of a mere Phantom or Shadow. For when the Soul lives and abides for ever,

*1 John 2.17. the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof.* And what, alas! will the Soul do, when uncloth'd and strip'd of all the things she now delighteth in?

It can't be long before this World, and all the Idols of it, will bid us all a final Farewell. For when Man dies, he can carry nothing of the World along with him.

*Luke 12.20. And whose then shall all these things be?* And

*1 Cor. 15.19. if in this Life only we have Hope, what in such an Hour shall we do?* For, the Gods

we have made, being taken away from us;

*Judges 18.24. what, according to Micah, have we more?*

Is there any thing that can make up such

a Loss? or, render it but tolerable to us? Or, in the words of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* Mark 8. 36.

Our Life is called a Warfare, and we accordingly, are to behave our selves as good Soldiers of Christ. Now, *no Man*, says the 2 Tim. 2. Apostle, *that warreth, intangleth himself with the Affairs of this Life.* Life is also compared to a Race, and therefore we must diet our selves, and see that we are disburden'd of all earthly Weights, to the end we may so run as to obtain. And as we are sometimes also consider'd as in the State of Travellers, since our Journy is but short, we should not load and incumber our selves with unnecessary Provisions. Nor need we be told, that without the least Stop, we are swiftly passing to our everlasting Home, which when a few Days, or Moments more are past, we shall not fail to reach: and then, being swallow'd up in Eternity, 'twill be a matter of great indifference to us, what were our Accommodations on the way, or our outward State while here. And even during our Abode in this World, were it not for Luxury, Ambition, profuse Fancy and Imagination, how little of it would serve our turn, and be sufficient for our short stay? And at how low a rate should we value all besides? *Brethren*, says the Apostle, *the Time is short.* And what then

is his Advice? That we should therefore, as some have taught, *eat and drink*, and live like Swine, and in so brutish a manner make the most of our short Time? By no means, but the direct contrary, *That we use the World as not abusing it*; or, with that indifference of Mind, as if we used it not.

<sup>1 Cor. 7.</sup>  
<sup>29, 31.</sup>  
See Bez.  
in loc.

That we are Creatures design'd not so much for this as another Life, seems plain from our Nature and Make: and therefore, while here, we ought to act like Expectants of another World. The *Jews*, when Exiles, forgot not their own Country, neither could they be merry in a strange Land. Besides, unless we die to the World while we live, 'twill be hard to part with it when we come to die. And when that Hour approacheth, in which we must leave it, and our Places here shall know us no more, it will not signify so much to us, what were our Circumstances in it, as what was our Self-Denial, Sobriety, and Mortification towards it. Nay, to go down to the Chambers of Death, and Hell, in a more pleasant and merry way than some others do, having the Smiles, Sun-shine, and Applause of this World, will not lessen, but aggravate, and increase Men's Misery there.

And

And if we join those words of our Lord,  
*How hardly shall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God?* with the Practice  
of *Jesurun*, and *Prayer of Agay*, they all instruct us in what we see confirmed by common Observation; that the more Wealth increases, the more, through our own Corruptions, our Danger, and the Difficulties of our Salvation increase upon us. Some few, it must be own'd, have been both Great and Good; but thence we can't conclude, that their Temptations did not grow in proportion to their Estates. Nor may we therefore think, that the Wise-Man forgot himself, when he said, *The Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them.* Certainly, considering the Depravity of Human Nature, it requires a good Degree of Grace, and a Mind well establish'd in it, to bear the Weight of a large Fortune, without sinking into Sensuality; or being lifted up with Pride, or some way or other made the worse by it. Nor is scarce any thing more common, than for an advanced State, to shock unsettled Virture, and prevent the Progress of a hopeful Beginning.

If we lean upon the World, 'twill prove deceitful, and be as a broken Reed to us: and the Hope we build upon it shall be as a Spider's Webb. And, oh! how will it then confound our Thoughts to be ask'd, *What Fruit we had in those things, whereof we are now*

now ashamed? Surely we shall see Reason  
 Ch. 5. 8,9. then to say, as in the Wisdom of Solomon,  
*What hath Pride profited us? Or, what good  
 hath Riches, with our Vaunting, brought us?*  
*All those things are passed away like a Shadow,  
 and as a Post that hasted by.* And being  
 gone, they are, as to any Comfort they can  
 afford us, as if they had never been. Nay,  
 when the World leaves us, it don't so  
 much as leave us a grateful Remembrance,  
 or any delightsom Footsteps of it. For, as  
 V. 10, 11. it there follows, *'Tis as a Ship that passeth  
 over the Waves of the Water; or, as when  
 a Bird hath flown through the Air; leaving  
 no Trace, or Token of their Way to be  
 found.* 'Tis true, we may make Reflec-  
 tions upon it, but they'll all be ungrateful  
 and tormenting to us.

And even while the World is in our posse-  
 sion, doth it not commonly fill us with Vexa-  
 tion and Trouble, partly through Fear of  
 losing what we have in it, and partly through  
 Fear of being taken from it? *O Death,*

*Ecclesiasti-* therefore says the Son of Sirach, how bit-  
 cus 41. 1. *ter is the Remembrance of thee, to a Man that*  
inimitable *liveth at Rest in his Possessions: unto the Man*  
*that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath*  
*Prosperity in all things!* On the contrary,  
 the World causes others to die through an  
 Excess of Joy; like that poisonous Herb,  
 some write of, which threw Men into a  
 mad and deadly Laughter. Yea, what  
 numbers

numbers hath it kill'd in its Embraces,  
and betray'd with a Kiss?

Nor may we think to divide and share  
our Hearts betwixt these Rivals, Heaven  
and Earth; since 'tis so plainly told us,  
we *cannot serve God and Mammon*. While Mat. 6. 24.  
we regale our selves therefore, in seeking  
to gratify our earthly Desires, we only add  
Fuel to the Fire; and throw Oil into the  
Flame. What madness then is it, for the  
sake of Lusts, that are not only mean and  
fordid, but never satisfy'd, to run the ha-  
zard of the Torments of Hell, which will  
never end? An insatiable Appetite is rec-  
kon'd a sore Judgment; which yet is the  
true Case, as you have heard, of the earthly-  
minded: For they *enlarge their Desire as Hell*, Hab. 2. 5.  
*and are as Death, and cannot be satisfied.* And  
no wonder it should be so, when their De-  
sires, as St. James speaks of the Tongue,  
*are set on fire of Hell:* which never says, *It* James 3.6.  
*is enough.* And certainly, to hunt after that Prov. 30.  
*which we can never find in this World,* 16.  
and prevent our selves thereby of the Hap-  
piness of the next, is to make our selves  
miserable in both. For 'tis but the Sha-  
dow of Happiness that here we run after;  
which when we pursue, it flies from us,  
and by catching at it, we lose the Sub-  
stance. Is it not great pity then, that we  
should *labour in the very Fire, and weary our* Hab. 2. 13.  
*selfes for very Vanity;* when in another way

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<sup>1 Cor. 15.</sup> we could not miss of Success, and are  
ult. sure, that our *Labour will not be in vain in  
the Lord?*

<sup>Luke 6.</sup> But could we obtain what we here pur-  
sue, yet how dreadful, think you, must it be  
to have our Portion of Ease and Rest only  
in this Life? *Wo*, therefore, says Christ,  
<sup>24.</sup> *unto you that are Rich*, that is, in earthly  
things alone; *for ye have receiv'd your Conso-  
lation*. And what poor Comfort will it be  
unto us, to be bidden to remember, That  
in our Life-time we *had our Good things*,  
while *others had their Evil*? Yea, will it  
<sup>Ch.16.25.</sup> not make our Ears to tingle, and Hearts  
to ake, to be told, that *we must be tor-  
mented*, while *they shall be comforted for ever-  
more?*

<sup>Rom. 1.</sup> We are not now, as our own Consciences  
25. will tell us, in a State of Innocency; and  
therefore, while here, we must not think  
to enjoy a Paradise, but to do Penance.  
And, indeed, to seek for Rest here, is to  
disturb the Divine Order, and to worship  
and serve the Creature more than the Crea-  
tor. Nor is it possible, while we so do,  
that we should answer the Design of the  
Christian Religion; which is to perfect,  
and exalt our Souls, by taking them off  
from the Objects of Sense, and raising them  
up to those of Faith, which are more ex-  
cellent. Nay, how much below the End  
and Law of our Creation shall we act, if  
for

for want of a Spiritual Gust, and not favoring the Things of God, we pursue after no other Pleasures than those of the Animal Life, which lie open to Brutes? Prodigious! that nothing will please us, but that which can't; I mean, so as to satisfy, and not satiate, or surfeit us! And how strange is it, that we who have thinking Faculties, by which we can ascend, and have Conversation above the Clouds, should nevertheless be enamour'd with nothing but what makes court to our Senses? Or, that we won't believe and love what our Eyes do not see, tho the Evidence be plain and full, both of its Being and immense Goodness? And 'tis to be lamented, that our Affections, contrary to what they were design'd for, should be so miserably misplac'd, as to be fix'd upon an inferiour, instead of the suprem Good; as manifestly they are, while they stick to the Creature, and are Col. 3. 2. set, not on things above, but on things on the Earth. As if the latter were preferable to the former, and sensitive Objects of greater account than those of Faith; when indeed, they are less than Nothing, and Vanity, in comparison of the substantial Glory of the unseen World. Surely our Folly herein is unspeakably greater than that of the *Indians*, who are said to part with their Gold for Glass. If therefore we laugh at them for so doing, what Objects

of Derision are we, in preferring the Trifles of this Earth, to the Felicities above?

By an immoderate Pursuit of the World, therefore, we do as well unman, as vainly fatigue and deceive our selves. For, if we continue, with those mention'd by the Prophet *Amos*, to *pant after the Dust of the Earth*, it is a plain Symptom, not only of a distemper'd Palate, but of a crazy Brain, and an impair'd Intellect; and we seem to forget that 'twas a Curse upon the Serpent, That he should *eat Dust all the Days of his Life*. Nor is this consistent with our near affinity to the World of Spirits, that we feed so greedily on Husks, which will satisfy none but Swine. To seek for a Paradise in this Desart, what is it, but to proclaim to the World, that we are not well in our Wits? it being that which can't be found here, unless by Madmen and Fools. 'Tis not a little that we detract from our Souls, while we imagine they can be satisfy'd with what this World furnishes. Our Pleasures here are all muddy, and far from refined; and while we suffer our selves to dissolve in them, spending our days in Luxury and Softness, we offend against the Dignity, as well as Author of our Beings. Man was made for an higher End than to grovel on the Ground, and embrace a Dunghil. The Earth therefore should not be our Pillar, but Footstool; and instead of

of lying down to rest, we should trample upon it: which we are taught, as some think, by that Hieroglyphic, in the Revelation of St. John, of a *Woman cloth'd with the Sun, and the Moon under her Feet.* Rev.12.1.

Our Hopes, Inquiries, and Aims, are not then to be confin'd to the things of this Life; and we sadly fail, not only of our Duty and Interest, but of what we profess, if they rise no higher, and we look no farther. And as it casts a Reproach on our Reason, to be such Moles and Worms of the Earth, as to be blind and unconcern'd about Heaven; so we contradict ourselves when we talk of the Glory of another World, and yet are willing to have our Portion in this. You would think it very absurd in a Pilot, always to steer, and bend his Course to the quite contrary Point to which he was bound: or, for a Man to turn his Back on the Object he pretends to pursue, and thereby render himself less capable of finding what he would be thought to be in quest of, than if he made the blindest Search imaginable after it. But as absurd as this is, 'tis our own Case, while, notwithstanding our high and heavenly Calling, we seek for Happiness in an inferior, and not the highest Good.

Moreover, 'tis to be consider'd, that this earthly Mindedness, from which I am discarding, as it argues a great Defect in our

Under-

Understandings, so no less a Depravity in  
 Heb. 12. our Wills. For if *Esau* was deem'd a pro-  
 16. fane Person, who for one Morsel of Meat  
 sold his Birth-right; what are they, who  
 sell their heavenly Patrimony for a little  
 fordid Dung? Surely these, thus earthly  
 in their Souls, are not only *the Children of*  
 Job 30. 8. *Fools*, as *Job* speaks, *but viler than the Earth*;  
 and shall therefore be spued out of its Mouth,  
 into the bottomless Pit.

The use of the World, 'tis true, is allow'd  
 us; but to abuse it, by making it our  
 End, or not to use it in subordination to  
 an higher End, is as plainly forbidden us.  
 And while we use it, and the Good things  
 of it, its Lusts and sinful Pleasures are to  
 be avoided. Yea, tho in a subordinate  
 way, and with moderation, we may re-  
 joice in all that we have; yet if we live  
 in Pleasure, making it, as we say, our  
 Element, like the *sensual Widow*, we are  
 1 Tim. 5. 6. *dead while we live*; and, what is dreadful  
 to think, shall be *damned when we die*.

We are apt to have too high an Opin-  
 ion of the World, when we look on it  
 through a Magnifying-Glass; but our E-  
 steem of it presently sinks, whenever our  
 Perceptions of it are right, and according  
 to Truth. For which reason it may be not  
 unfitly compar'd to those petty Shows,  
 which look agreeably enough through a  
 false Medium, but lose all their Beauty in  
 an

an open Light. And even those things we commonly value above the rest of the World, derive their Worth, not so much from any Excellency of their own, as from the good, or rather wrong Opinion, we have of them. And 'tis a known case, that the World, which lies in wait to deceive us, takes the advantage of our Error and Ignorance. It shines therefore in the dark, but loseth its Lustre, like many other things, when it comes to the light. And were it not that we had wrong Apprehensions of it, we could never be so fottish as to erect Altars, and sacrifice our All to it. But when once our Eyes are open'd, we shall see our Folly ; as *Adam* and *Eve* saw their Nakedness, and were ashamed. Yea, should we once find our selves trick'd and ruin'd by it, which God grant we never may ; we should then hate it, more than ever we lov'd it. And how little will they think of the World, who for it have pawn'd, nay, sold their precious Souls ; when they come to consider what a sorry Exchange, and wretched Bargain they have made ? Our Saviour hath liken'd Hypocrites to *a whited Sepulchre*, which appears beautiful without, but within is full of dead Mens Bones, and all Uncleanness : The like may be said of the World. And as the Sepulchres of the *Jews* are said to have been whited, that Men might the better see and avoid them, and not

Matth. 23.  
27.

not contract an Uncleanness to themselves, by touching of them ; so it were well if we could learn to be thus cautious of the World. Did we but take notice of the Filthiness that is in it, we could not but see reason to loath it, whatever Gloss, Men, and the Deceiver of Mankind, in conjunction with our wild Conceits, have put upon it.

Psal. 58.  
4, 5.

The World, indeed, often sings us a *Syren's* Song, which carries a kind of Fascination in it to those, who do not, with the deaf Adder, stop their Ears against the Charmer ; and having thrown us into unnatural Transports, or lull'd us asleep, we are entertain'd with pleasing Dreams, of Riches, Honours, or Pleasures, suited to our Gust and Inclination. But when a sick Bed, or some awakening Providence, brings us to our Senses, or Death opens our Eyes, which Unbelief had shut, and the Light of another World strikes upon them ; all these things will then be found to be but airy Bubbles, and, as Spectres of the Night, they'll vanish, and be seen no more. And, believe me, the Intent of this *Syren*, in seeking to charm us, and lock up our Senses, is only to get an Opportunity effectually to destroy us.

From

From the whole then, let us see that we be not as the Children of *Reuben* and *Gad*, who were for setting up their Habitation and Rest in the Land of *Gilead*; rather than pass over *Jordan*, to inherit the Land of Promise. Yea, our Care should be, not to worship a Lump of Earth, or any thing belonging to it, of the same perishing Qualities with our Bodies, which, originally, were taken and form'd out of it. Neither let us be so cruel to our own Souls, as to tie them to so disagreeable an Object. And whosoever shall do this, is more inhuman to himself, than ever *Mezentius* was to others; who is said to have tied the Living to dead Bodies, that their Death might both be prolonged and the more terrible. In a word, as we would not that God should be our Enemy, we must take heed lest we fall into that Friendship of the World, which is Enmity with him. And therefore let me exhort you in the words of the Prophet *Micah*, *Arise ye* <sup>James 4:4</sup> *and depart, for this is not your Rest.* <sup>Mic. 2. 10.</sup>

And now that we may do thus, we should so set the Varnish of this World, and the solid Glory of the next, one over against the other, as to form a Comparison between them; and thus continue to do, till we come to fix our Hearts on that which shall appear to be most deserving of them. And on

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on which side this will fall, if our discerning Faculty be but rightly dispos'd, is very easy to determine. For while we act rationally, we can never prefer *broken Cisterns* to the *Fountain of living Waters*; or chuse to dwell in the *House of Bondage*, rather than breathe in a free Air, and possess a fertile Country, even a *Land that flows with Milk and Honey*. We are therefore, I say, well to consider the difference there is betwixt the things of Time, and those of Eternity; possessing our Minds, as well of the Truth and Excellency of the latter, as of the Vanity and Emptiness of the former. And as we would not be allured and overcome by earthly Delights and Injoyments, we should drink as deep, and as often as we can, of those Pleasures that flow from above; and so immerge our selves in them, that our Minds may receive their deepest Tincture, and brightest Colours from them.

Nor must we suffer the World to hoodwink us, or put out our Eyes, as the *Philistines* did *Sampson's*; for then shall we become an easy Prey to it, and on all Occasions be the Sport of it. When *Isaac's* Eyes were dim, that he could not see, he was unable to distinguish betwixt *Esau* and *Jacob*. And when ever the World gets the blind side of us, we shall easily be imposed upon

upon by it, and without any scruple, take Pebble-Stones for Pearls ; and notwithstanding the Cheat, conceit our selves, like *Ephraim*, to be *rich*, and to *have found out* Hosea 12. Substance ; and say with the *Laodiceans*, we <sup>8.</sup> Rev. 3.17. are increas'd with Goods, and have need of nothing.

It concerns us therefore, as often as may be, to withdraw from the World, that we may the better attend to the Dictates of our own Minds. Neither must we shut out the Light which God is pleas'd to give us of another World ; for to behold it, as represented by Divine Revelation, is one of the best Preservatives against all the Inticements of this World. And could we but weigh the World in an equal Ballance, and view it just as 'tis, without its Varnish and Paint, with which it is wont to misrepresent it self, and deceive Mankind ; we should be so far from admiring and chusing it for it self, or as a Competitor with Heaven, that from a low, but just Opinion of it, we should not a little despise it. In a word, did we duly govern our Appetites, guard the Avenues of the Heart, our Bodily Senses, and correct the Errors of our Mind, as to temporal things ; it would be a very good Step to prevent the Design of the World upon us, and our doting upon it. Nor can we be in

in any danger from it, while our Hearts are well fortify'd; since it never prevails over us against our Wills, and hath no Charms but what our Concupiscence imparts to it. For whatever Virtue there may be in the Earth, to attract gross Bodies to it self; yet it could never draw and enamour our Souls (which are not only of a finer Substance, but made for an higher Purpose) was it not our own Fault.

But as what I have hitherto spoke on this Head has been principally in the general, I'll beg your Patience while I offer a few more particular Directions. And,

1. Let us beware of every thing that may directly occasion the setting our Hearts on this World. In respect then of our selves, this Evil is remarkably owing to our short-sightedness and wrong Ideas; for heavenly things being out of our sight, are too often out of our thoughts; while terrene Objects being present, take all advantages to affect and impress our Senfes. And tho our Notions of them are very disagreeable to the Nature of the things, and wide of Truth, yet they too much accord with our deprav'd Minds. And it must be confess'd, that our too great Intimacy with the World, gives it an Opportunity to practise upon us, and steal away our Hearts.

Sin

Sin also, thro its Deceitfulness, as well as Strength and Violence, will, if we look not well to it, give such a Bias to our Minds, as will incline and determine them to earthly Objects. And our Love to these is too often blown into a Flame, and heighten'd thro the Subtlety of Satan, in recommending and setting off this Clod of Earth by false Lights, and the Gloss he puts upon it.

The Examples of others also contribute very much to this. The World hath great Numbers who adore it, and set up as Candidates for it; and we are naturally inclin'd, out of Pride and Emulation, to outdo our Neighbours if we can; or else are over-easy, and will be Fools for Company. Besides, what further excites our Minds in the pursuit of this World, is, because tho many hunt and seek after it, yet 'tis the Lot but of few to get much of it, which very much heightens our Opinion of their Felicity. The bright and quickning Beams of the Sun, which shed themselves on all, and the common Elements of Water and Air, so necessary for use, we take but little notice of; and were the most admir'd things of this World dispens'd in the like common manner, how ready should we then be to disregard them?

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From the whole then we may see, that we ought to deny our selves, converse with invisible Objects, and be renew'd in the Spirit of our Minds ; yea, that we must strive against Sin, withstand Temptation, and keep at a distance from all the Allurements of this evil World, as we would not be betray'd into an immoderate Love of it. And for our further Security against it,

2. In the next place, let us look to the End and Conclusion of the World. We

<sup>1 Pet. 4. 7.</sup> are expressly told by St. Peter, *That the End of all things is at hand.* And did we now see the World, as 'twill then look, how little would the Grandeur, and what we esteem the Glory of it, seem unto us ? And therefore the Son of Sirach might well say,

<sup>Ecc. 7. ult.</sup> *Whosoever thou takest in hand, remember the End, and thou shalt never do amiss.* For this would very much guard us against those Extremes, which we are so ready to run into. And we should be very indifferent to all the Delights of Sense, if we did but consider that 'tis but a very little while, and they will cease to affect us : or, if, as the Philosopher advis'd concerning Pleasure, we look'd on the World, not as it comes but goes, not as it finds but leaves us. And, Oh ! what an Alteration will it make in our Minds about the World, when we shall see the Glory, Plenty and Delights of it turn'd

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turn'd into Shame, Want, and Misery? And that it will be thus, and sooner perhaps than we are aware of, is too plain a Truth to be deny'd, as sad a Consideration as 'tis to some. For when the World goes, it leaves the Promises it hath made us un- perform'd, and our Souls empty and naked: Empty, I say, of what is good; but full of Horror, Remorse, Despair, and every thing that's tormenting.

But, alas! how is it that we should mind the End of the World, who are so sadly forgetful of our own, and need on all occasions to be told that we are Men, frail and mortal? Strange! that while we vex and waste our Spirits, as well as mace- rate our Bodies, by searching after we know not what in the Earth, we should never once remember that we are but Dust; nor entertain a serious Thought of that Place, so often before us, where all civil Distinctions vanish, and the Rich and the Poor meet together, and mingle their Dust!

But tho' twere to be wish'd that we were brought thus far in our Thoughts, yet here we are not to stop; for a much more surprizing Prospect is yet beyond it. An Instance of which we have in the end of that voluptuous Person, spoken of in the Parable; who, when upon Earth, was cloth'd

*A Funeral Sermon on the Death*

in Purple and fine Linen, and far'd sumptuously every day ; but when he died, was turn'd naked into Hell, having nothing to wrap himself in but merciless Flames, and not so much as a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue in the midst of them. By which we may see, how sad will be the End of all Persons of that Character : For being awaken'd by Death out of their Dreams of Happiness, in Hell they'll lift up their Eyes, and find themselves surrounded on every side with the devouring Flames of an everlasting Fire. And did we but go into the Sanctuary, and put the World into the Scales there, we should find it very deficient of what we took it to be,

*Hof. 12.7.* when the Ballances of Deceit were in our Hands ; and having thus been once duly appris'd both of the End of it, and of those who fix their Hearts upon it, we should neither trouble our selves long about it, or be deceiv'd by it. Nor is it difficult to imagine what a check it would be upon our sensual Enjoyments, did we

*Rom. 8.6.* but consider, that *to be carnally minded is Death* ; and that *their End is Destruction, who, without Moderation, mind earthly things.* For who would covet to live deli-

*Rev. 18.7.* ciously like *Babylon*, that well considers what a Degree of Torment shall be given her, sooner or later ? And was the natural

ral Man, or blind *Epicure*, but once prevail'd upon to open his Eyes, and behold his Danger, his Conversion from the Creature to his Maker might not then be despair'd of. For did he seriously consider, that while he runs into all Excess of Riot, <sup>Rom. 13.</sup> spending his Time in Chambering and <sup>13.</sup> Wantonness, and serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, he is all that time treasuring up unto himself Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and going in the broad way to Destruction, and even *as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks*; did he, I say, but think on all this, it would, as may reasonably be presum'd, affect him, as the Hand-writing on the Wall did *Belsazar*, amidst his Jollity, <sup>Dan. 5. 6.</sup> when he was feasting with his Lords and Princes, Wives and Concubines; or stop him however in his Career. But, alas! whilst he turns his Back upon his God, <sup>Jer. 50. 38.</sup> and is mad upon his Idols, he little thinks that 'tis for his Life.

Solomon would not that we should *look upon the Wine when it is red, when it giveth his Colour in the Cup, when it moveth it self aright*: neither should we look on the World as 'tis at present, in a gaudy Dress, lest our Hearts be entic'd with it; but rather view its End, and consider, that, like that, *at the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like a* <sup>Prov. 23.</sup> <sup>31, 32.</sup>

## A Funeral Sermon on the Death

like an Adder. And 'tis with this View  
 that he addresses to Youth in that ironi-  
 cal manner, when he says, *Rejoice, O  
 young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart  
 cheer thee in the days of thy Youth, and walk  
 in the ways of thy Heart, and in the sight of  
 thine Eyes; but know thou, that for all these  
 things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

As if he had said, consider the Issue of  
 such a Course, and follow it if thou durst.  
 And who in his Senses, that considers the  
 one, can prevail with himself to do the  
 other? How heartless would be our  
 Laughter, and all carnal Joy, did we  
 but consider that the End of that Mirth is  
 Heaviness? And elsewhere the same Wise-

man tells us, *Better is the End of a thing,  
 and more to be regarded, than the Begin-  
 ning thereof;* which should therefore be  
 duly consider'd in all that we enterprize  
 and go about. And this is what I have  
 now been advising to, that so we might  
 be very cautious how we catch at the  
 Baits of the World, its Pomp and Van-  
 ities. Pursuant to which Design,

3. In the last Place, let us be persuaded  
 to implore the Divine Assistance. By  
 Prayer our Souls ascend to Heaven, and  
 join'd with Fasting, it hath a mighty  
 Tendency to subdue all fleshly and world-  
 ly Lusts. And the God we call upon  
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can set the Evidence and Excellency of a future Happiness in so clear a Light, as will effectually convince us both of its Truth and transcendent Goodness. Yea, he can take off those Weights by which Psal. 119. we are bow'd down to the Earth, and <sup>25.</sup> remove those ill Dispositions of Mind, which make us cleave to the Dust. And tho our Souls, like an heavy and lifeless Lump, stir not from the Earth, yet there's Energy enough in his Grace to quicken and raise them up to Heaven. And if he will but come down to us, by the Attractions of his Spirit, like *Ezekiel's* Wheel, we shall be lifted up from the Earth, and ascend to him. For tho we, by our own Strength, can no more shake off the World, and cast it out of our Hearts, than stem the Tide, or stop the Sun in its Course ; yet to him, who is omnipotent, this is very easy. And tho our Inclinations to the things of this Life, as a second Nature, are so prevalent upon us, that we can no more controul, master or eradicate them, than the *Ethiopian* can change Jer. 13.23. his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots ; yet he that rais'd *Lazarus* out of his Grave, and made a World out of nothing, by the Word of his Power, can do it. Wherefore, on these and the like Considerations, we should cry mightily unto God for such

such Influences of his Spirit upon our Souls, as may raise them far above all earthly Objects ; that he would so diffuse his Grace, and shed abroad his Love in our Hearts, that our Love may yet abound more and more to him ; and that he would enable us daily to make use of Jacob's Ladder to ascend to Heaven, and turn away our Eyes from beholding Vanity. And since Faith is his Gift, and most contrary to a sensual Life, we should humbly beseech him to help our Unbelief, and to work that Faith in us which overcomes this World, and enters on a better. Nor must we forget to pray, that we may know Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings ; without which, we shall neither be conformable to his Death, nor seek those things which are above.

To conclude : Let us fall on our Knees, and earnestly beg, that God would give us such a Relish of the heavenly Manna, as may keep us from lusting after Onions and Garlick ; and that it may please him to replenish us with that living Water, which whosoever drinketh, shall never thirst more after Vanity.

I have now done with my Text; but I know you'll expect that something should be said of another Subject, and that we pay our Respects, in the solemnest manner we can, to the Memory of the Deceas'd. And on this I shall be shorter than otherwise I might be, partly because of the Nearness of my Relation; partly because you have fully known her *Manner of Life*, <sup>2 Tim. 3.</sup> together with her *Faith, Long-suffering and Charity*, as the Apostle says of himself to *Timothy*; and partly because the uncommon Endowments of Mind, with which she was adorn'd, are not easily represented. In which case, Silence, perhaps, may be more significant than Words can be. Nevertheless, that I may not altogether disappoint the Audience, I'll take leave to observe, That as 'twas many years past that she set out in the ways of Wisdom, and took upon her the Profession of Christ, and his Name; so ever since she was help'd, thro the Grace of God, to own him in all his Offices, she never fail'd, save involuntarily, thro the Restraints of Providence, to fill up her Place in his House, and at his Table: which she did to good purpose, as we have ground to believe; and not, in so remiss a manner, as, God knows, too many do.

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Those who were acquainted with her as a Christian, must be very sensible, that God had given her to know the Mysteries of his Kingdom, in a very considerable Degree. From whence she was able, on all occasions, like the good Houholder our Saviour mentions, *to bring forth out of her Treasure things new and old, and to give a Reason of the Hope which was in her*, viz. her Christian Faith. In which she was bless'd with a sound Judgment, in Matters particularly which are fundamental, and of the greatest Concernment. For as she stedfastly believ'd the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting, with the rest of the Articles of our Christian Creed; so she also believ'd, that there is no Name given under Heaven whereby Sinners can be sav'd, but that of Christ. Accordingly her Dependence was intirely upon him, and his Righteousness, as the alone Saviour and Refuge for Sinners.

And this Faith, which was thus fix'd on the Merits of a dying Jesus, shew'd it self by good Works; which instead of reciting, I will leave to *praise her in the Gates.*

As she was an Enemy to Bigotry and Superstition, so she was very Catholick in her Charity: For instead of confining it to a Party, she was known to extend it to

to all sincere Christians ; therefore she had a free Conversation with all such indifferently, as occasion did present, tho of a different Persuasion from her self in some things. For tho she made Conscience to have her stated Communion in the Worship of God, with those she thought nearest the Rule of his Word ; yet she ver-ry well knew that the Kingdom of God did not consist in Meats and Drinks, and was able to distinguish the essential from the more minute and ritual Parts of Religion : which some, thro the Prejudice of Education, a misguided Zeal, and rigid Temper, either cannot, or will not do.

She was noted by many for her publick Spirit, and few perhaps of her Sex and Station have been more concern'd than her self about the Publick Good. And by the Will she left behind her, 'tis sufficiently evident, that she had the Interest of Religion much at heart. And, Oh ! how many will feel the want of her, whose Necessties she hath many times supply'd ! But now she is gone to receive her Reward, by being replenish'd at the Fountain-Head, from him *who filleth all in all,* *and maketh all his creatures his own* *and his* *is every creature's end and aim.* The

The Death of her dear Husband, more than two years past, was a great Trial to her, and did not a little shock her Constitution, which had been somewhat broken before. And while in that respect she had, as I may say, one Foot in the Grave for so considerable a Time, 'tis not to be doubted but she was very thought-ful of her latter End, and the les surpriz'd when Death came and attack'd her in so hasty and violent a manner. And what I said on the Suddenness of his Death, upon the like melancholy occasion with this, is applicable, in a great measure, to her own; and therefore permit me now to refer you to that. Only I am willing to add, That tho, to her great Sorrow, she had lost the one half of her self, in the Loss of so near a Relative; yet as that became a Means, in the Hand of God, to *crucify her to the World*, and the Vanities of it, she now finds it, we may well hope, to turn greatly to her Account, even her eternal Gain.

It hath been the Wish of many, that when their Lord should come to call for them, he might find them employ'd in the Work which he gave them to do. And Providence so order'd it, that this should be the Lot of the Deceas'd: For on the Lord's Day, while she was attending

tending on God's publick Worship, and much impress'd with his Word, she was taken very ill with a Chillness and Shivering over her Body.

In the Evening, being follow'd with Stitches in her Side, she told her Servant, that she thought she was struck with Death. Nevertheless, as one who knew that all in this World is Vanity, and accordingly had plac'd her Happiness, not in the Creature, but the Creator, she express'd herself in the Psalmist's Words, *The Lord is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever*: Which Words she told a worthy Gentlewoman in the same Lodgings with her, with whom she had contracted no small Friendship, and who had been of great use to support and comfort her under all her Troubles.

In some little time after her Head was so affected, that she became insensible of the threatening Symptoms then upon her. And within twenty four Hours after that she made her Exit, in a very quiet manner; and is now, I doubt not, with her Saviour, in the Fruition of that God, whom she found to be the *Strength of her Heart, and chose to be her Portion for ever.*

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In which wise and happy Choice, that we may imitate and follow her, and in every thing else wherein she was praiseworthy, God of his Mercy grant, for Jesus Christ his sake. *Amen.*



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